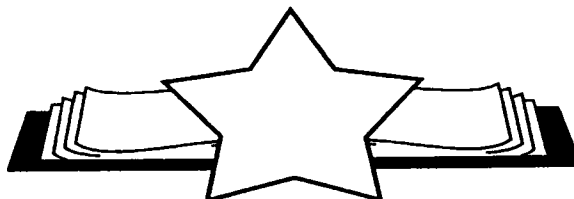


NEW JERSEY

1999-2000

Guidelines and Application


STAR


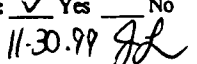


ORIGINAL

SCHOOLS

Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 22, 1999

County	Burlington County		
District (Proper Name)	Bordentown Regional	School District	
District Address	48 Dunns Mill Road		
	street/p. o. box	Bordentown, N.J.	08505
	city	(609) 298-3041 Fax (609) 298-2515 Email	zip code
District Telephone	John Polomano		
Chief School Administrator			
Nominated School or Nominated Charter School (Proper Name)	Clara Barton School		
School Address	100 Crosswicks Street		
	street/p. o. box	Bordentown, N.J.	08505
	city	(609) 298-0676 Fax (609) 324-2898 Email	zip code
School Telephone			
School Principal	Berenice Blum-Bart		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature			

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY	
Approved: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	County Superintendent's Signature 
11-30-99 	

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**NEW JERSEY
STAR SCHOOLS
1999-2000 APPLICATION**

RESPONSES to the information below and the statements must be **ANONYMOUS**. No reference should be made to the names of the district or the school. Use the words "the school" in referring to the applicant in the responses to the statements.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Grade Levels Pre K Handicapped - 6th _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	School Enrollment <u>365</u> Specialization of School or Whole-School Reform Model Ready to Learn...One Family _____ _____
Previous Star School: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, Year(s) _____		

KEYBOARDED RESPONSES to the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages**. Keyboard the statement followed by the response. Limit your response to the number of lines specified.

1. Describe the school's specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives, the student educational needs and the *Core Curriculum Content including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards** that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement. **(Maximum of 70 lines for response)**
2. Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty, and detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and the specialization or whole-school reform model. **(Maximum of 30 lines for response)**
3. Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies. **(Maximum of 40 lines for response)**
4. Describe student performance for the school years 1997-98 and 1998-99 and the means by which student results are measured, and outline other school accomplishments during this period. Detail the relationship of both student performance and school accomplishments to the specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives. **(Maximum of 40 lines for response)**
5. Describe collaborative efforts with parents, business, the community and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement. **(Maximum of 30 lines)**
6. **Previous Star School Winners Only:** Provide an addendum to your application that describes efforts to expand or replicate the specialization or whole-school reform model within the school and/or the district. Have there been dissemination activities beyond the school or district? If so, please elaborate. **(Maximum of 30 lines for response)**

*The May 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
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1. Describe the school's specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives, the student educational needs and the Core Curriculum content including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* that it addresses. Detail how it promotes high student achievement.

This school's specialization **Ready to Learn...One Family** emphasizes the school/home/community connection and has been elaborated upon and enhanced since its introduction three years ago. It was developed by the principal in partnership with the faculty, parents and other community members to meet the needs of children growing up in our complex society. The program was designed to foster and create a caring and involved family of learners. This theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** focuses on key vocabulary and concepts such as...Respect, Effort, Affirmation, Daily Co-operation, Year long goals; Technology, Organization skills; Literacy, Excellence, Achievement, Responsibility, Negotiate: resolve conflict. It meets the needs of our defined population. Our urban school serves students in grades K-6 and reflects the diverse population of our community. Students represent multiple ethnic groups and nationalities. Economically, 19% of our students' families have low enough incomes to qualify for free or reduced lunch. More than 25% of our students live in a single parent household. During the 1998-1999 school year, our school had a mobility rate of 34%, in comparison with the state average of 16%. These students' learning is disrupted due to academic, social and/or emotional adjustment issues as they move from one school and community to another. Further, approximately 20% of our students are multiply disabled and attend special education classes. It was also identified that differing family values and increased responsibilities, lack of family time, an at risk population, and an increase in violence have all contributed to a sense of isolation in our children and their families.

Ready to Learn...One Family allowed our school to specialize in early identification and intervention of children's interests and at risk needs, and offer support and encouragement for the development of the unique talents and skills of all our children, while engaging a myriad of community groups and members in our school goals to provide support for all students in grades K-6 who would benefit from the extended school family.

Student participation in **Ready to Learn...One Family** gave our students the prerequisites for all future successful learning experiences; pride in themselves and their heritage, increased self esteem, increased communication and organizational skills, conflict resolution strategies, responsibility, academic achievement, respect, and literacy attainment. Close and frequent communication with parents, business and community benefited students by fostering a close knit "family support system", providing extra help and caring for students' academic, social and emotional difficulties. By working as one interconnected and extended family, students are better prepared to live and function in our complex world.

This theme served as a springboard for many of our activities, events, programs, staff development, community coalitions and projects to promote high student achievement and self-esteem. School wide objectives were established at all grade levels and integrated with the Workplace Readiness and Core Curriculum Standards. Our first goal, fostering self-esteem for all our student from various back grounds was supported by many school developed programs.

Our **career-awareness program, Project Discovery**, highlights the **contributions of people of various cultures** to various career fields, as community speakers reflect the diversity of our school population and speak to students monthly about careers. "**Celebrate our Differences Day**" is an annual event designed to celebrate **diversity and appreciation** for others. Over 25 **community organizations**, representing various cultural, ethnic, and disability groups, meet with groups of students to present information and share experiences. Students learn to respect and appreciate **individual differences**, recognizing the **common bonds** that unite us all. "**Puppy Love**", a **literature-based interactive program** sponsored by our PTO, emphasized the concept of **appreciation of individual differences**. Through our **Veterans' Day program**, interactions with our **senior citizens** and **Community readers program** students have the opportunity to interact with positive community role models of various backgrounds. Strong ties with community groups such as the **Concerned Citizens of Bordentown**, who support the academic and social needs of our community's Afro-American students and the **Sarah Seidel Sisterhood of the B'Nai Abraham Synagogue**, which sponsors an annual Anne Frank essay contest, support our goals. These programs incorporate **Workplace Readiness Standard 1 and 4**, which address the employability skill of getting along with others, self-management skills, working cooperatively in groups, and respect for others.

Another objective is building upon communication and negotiation skills, responsibility for one's actions, co-operation, and respect teaching children strategies to peacefully resolve conflicts and prevent violent behavior through **peacemaking/conflict resolution** strategies. This objective was designed to support the concept of a caring and involved family of learners and is achieved through special programs, parent meetings, community involvement and class lessons. These activities are aligned with **Workplace Readiness Standard 3 and 4**, which address workplace readiness skills, critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. A major aspect of this objective is our **Conflict Resolution Program** which teaches our students conflict resolution. Our school is involved in **CARE** (Community Action Reaching Everyone), a consortium of community groups and school staff who work together to promote a **peacemaking model of relationships** for children in our community. Recent evaluations indicate that students show more respect to teachers, friends and parents because of what they have learned and 95% mastered conflict resolution skills which helped them to deal with conflicts more constructively. Various grade levels are involved in the national student activity, the **Kindness and Justice Challenge**, which encourages students to practice the types of kindness and justice acts exemplified by **Reverend Martin Luther King**. Our Parent-Teacher Organization sponsors parent **workshops** and children programs such as Building Bridges on conflict resolution strategies to strengthen the school program and carry-over from school to home.

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Students use critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving in all content areas and across the curriculum. For example, our fourth grade students were involved in a well known state **Youth in Philanthropy** project which involved writing original books for pediatric cardiac patients. It integrated science, health, cooperative learning, writing, technology, and illustrating of books. This project fostered academic excellence, literacy, effort on the behalf of others and co-operation incorporating Workplace Readiness Standards 2, 3 and 4 focusing on co-operative work, developing thoughts and ideas and problem solving; and Standards 1.2 and 1.4; Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards 2.1 and 2.2; and Language Arts and Literacy Standards 3.1 through 3.5. Our objective of giving our students the opportunity to work together with the community to help students develop study skills, effective work habits and self-management skills is illustrated through our award winning **"Connections" Mentoring Program**. This program reflects the tenants of Workplace Readiness Standards 3 and 4. **Community mentors** meet weekly with at risk students to work together toward identified **student goals** in the areas of self-esteem, study and organizational skills, and self-management skills, developing a strong school community partnership while strengthening student skills. In both day-to-day activities and monthly special events, we extend our school family by becoming **involved in our city's affairs** and soliciting the **participation and involvement of community members** and city programs within our schools. Community members are a woven strand in the fabric of our school, regularly volunteering in our school weekly as mentors and classroom helpers, as well as actively participating in our monthly community/school events. These activities support Workplace Readiness Standards 1, 3 and 4. Through these school/community partnerships, we have been able to meet our objective of creating a social environment in the classroom and the community that encourages a learning community to develop, as well as a shared vision about improving long-term understanding and connections for children, families and communities.

2. Describe the professional development activities and research of the school's faculty, and detail to what extent these activities contribute to exemplary teaching practices in their classrooms. Explain the link between these activities and the specialization or whole-school reform model.

Research of the school faculty four years ago indicated that there were many senior staff with little to no attendance at workshops. Much of the teaching was in isolation. Program, school structure, and schedules did not support professional articulation, or exposure of staff to new and innovative practices necessary to support student learning, and family/community participation. Therefore a unifying theme **"Ready to Learn...One Family"** was designed by the principal and faculty. A framework was proposed to support this overlying theme and make real connections for the entire community of learners.

Presently, the school district has a strong commitment to train its team of administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents through its ongoing Staff Development Program. Faculty can accumulate CPU credits for participation in after school workshops. Professional training also is regularly provided in faculty meetings where articulation and presentations on integrating the standards into the curriculum and daily lesson plans occurs. Modeling of lessons by the principal, classroom observations and Professional Improvement Plans are part of the process that contributes to exemplary teaching.

Teacher training is ongoing and has occurred in many areas. Some areas are: **cooperative learning** to provide students and staff with opportunities to work together as they will in the adult work world; **alternative assessment** to provide teachers and students with identifiable measures of student work; **multiple intelligences/different learning styles** to provide instruction through a variety of modalities so as to best meet the learning needs of our students; **peacemaking/conflict resolution** to have ongoing weekly peace making lessons and recognition programs, so as to insure that students and staff have the skills to work cooperatively with others and to be **responsible** for their actions; **technology** to provide state of the art instruction and provide a comfort level for staff use of technology; **special education** to provide teachers with a better understanding and acceptance of individual student needs and differences; **equity and gender** to promote an understanding of the unlimited opportunities available to all students; **hands on science** to provide teachers with strategies for hands on activities and provide students with opportunities to actively investigate; **CORE Curriculum Standards** to provide a greater understanding of the content standards to create effective lessons and develop programs that meet the needs of all students; **gifted learner** to provide teachers with an understanding of the needs of these students and to address their learning. All of this training was focused on developing and enhancing teaching practices in the classroom and better preparing our students within the framework of the school theme **Ready to Learn...One Family**.

Our school theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** has created a strong relationship with the rich variety of community organizations that support the nurturing of shared values. The link between these activities and the specialization that parent helpers and volunteers contributed, in addition to funding programs, provided multiple ways to reach year long goals. Community members participate as class helpers and resources for students, by sharing careers and hobbies, and by also presenting classroom lessons on specific curriculum topics, creating a united school wide focus of involved learners tying into our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family**. Faculty and administration actively enlisted parent and community involvement which helped bring the learning cycle for students "full circle", better preparing our students for the 21st century.

3. Describe the leadership style of the school's administration and how the management and educational program demonstrate administrative and fiscal efficiency. Describe any innovative scheduling and/or management strategies.

The principal of this school is visionary, inspirational, goal oriented, and first and foremost a team player determined to empower teachers. This is accomplished by providing choices for staff in their daily activities as well as in deciding and implementing year long themes, focus days and special projects/programs. The principal first identifies school needs based on faculty, student and community feedback, surveys, test scores and an overall assessment of building climate. The principal also serves as a visible model for teachers and students, establishing standards for everyone to reach for, and participates "side by side", "hand in hand" to assure that our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** has credibility and support. Teachers are empowered to take part in the decision-making process and program implementation. The same message is practiced in the classroom with our students through small or group decision-making, grade level representation, and group and 1:1 articulation. The principal is an educational leader who provides and models instruction in the classroom, presents district and state workshops on topics such as conflict resolution, portfolios, assessment and hands on science, and has also written curriculum for the district and the state Science Core Standards and Science Framework. The principal encourages faculty to participate in local and state educational conferences and to contribute and work on state projects to promote their learning and the very concepts our theme addresses.

Management strategies were implemented over the course of the past few years in order for the school to truly function cohesively and as **One Family**. Changes and additions involved creating a master schedule that allowed for grade level teams to have planning at the same period and to have meetings with the administrator on a regular basis to address specific grade level needs. This was in addition to meetings with the entire staff. Regularly scheduled faculty meetings were designed and scheduled to: provide ongoing open forums and planning, introduce and share teaching strategies/programs, and provide opportunity for cross grade level articulation.

At the beginning of each year, committees were formed with staff signing up for their committee of choice and then formally meeting on the last Monday of each month. These committees function as a "part of the whole", supporting our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family**. Committees such as Staff Development, Mentoring, Technology and Building Challenges, were created based on the needs of the building. These committees, along with principal input, propose and design programs for building in-service; student support programs, such as our mentoring program; technology proposals and action plans; and focus days. Since the principal is the only administrator in the building the teachers and principal work closely together to design and create meaningful programs for the entire learning community.

Many programs have been designed and implemented to reinforce our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family**: a Peer Buddy program between first and sixth graders to improve literacy, support student organization skills, and responsibility and achievement; a HELP (Help Extend Learner's Progress) program to assist at risk students and promote academic excellence for students requesting extra support; a Peacemaking/Conflict Resolution program to help students resolve conflicts and develop lifelong strategies for co-operation; a Mentoring program that partners a caring adult with an at risk student; an after school homework/counseling program for teacher recommended students and a variety of focus days/evenings such as Celebrate Our Differences Day, Veteran's Day, Read Across America Week, Family Math Night, and Family Reading Night.

Our program requires minimal direct expenditures and has been readily supported through administrative budget as well as direct program support from the Board of Education. Enrichment/theme assemblies supported by the PTO based on principal/staff recommendation enhance the theme. A significant amount of money has been received due to grant and matching fund dollars generated by the principal writing and co-writing grants. Awarded grant monies go directly into many aspects of our theme supporting Literacy, Technology, Conflict Resolution, Mentoring, and Respect for others and their differences. Community funding supports field trips to Liberty Science Center, special grade level trips, and student awards.

4. Describe student performance for the school years 1997-98 and 1998-99 and the means by which student results are measured, and outline other school accomplishments during this period. Detail the relationship of both student performance and school accomplishments to the specialization or whole-school reform model and its objectives.

Our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** has been evaluated using a number of modalities based on cumulative observable progress and standardized measures. For Project Discovery, children are given pre and post evaluation instruments as a way to measure increased student knowledge and awareness of different careers. Our Peacemaking Program is evaluated by the number of students honored at our monthly Peacemakers' luncheon, teacher reports of utilization of conflict resolution strategies in the classroom, lunchroom and playground, and by the decreasing number of students who are sent to the principal's office for disciplinary action/intervention due to student interpersonal conflicts. Efforts to increase awareness of and respect for others is measured by the increase in numbers of community volunteers, increase in the number of special events and programs which relate to our program's theme, and the increase number of contacts with our various community groups and organizations. Our Connections program is designed to support students self esteem and academic skills by pairing a caring adult mentor with a student mentee. Mentors and mentees fill out a weekly survey along with periodic monthly interviews with the guidance counselor to monitor the programs success. This program has had a 95 % success rate and has received two awards for its effectiveness. Increased student self-esteem is measured by the reduction in the number of students who require intervention for self-esteem issues, self-reports from students of increased pride in their cultural backgrounds, increased utilization of library materials which focus on these issues, and increased

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quantity and quality of student-selected individual research reports. Student assessment to measure academic success and literacy is done by individual class teachers relative to student class projects, such as book reports, writing experiences, oral presentations and plays. Effective student interactions are modeled based on the Peacemaking guidelines and the use of conflict resolution strategies, resulting in a reduction in overall student discipline problems. The **HELP** program (Help Extend Learner's Progress) designed to help students meet yearlong goals such as academic improvement, responsibility to work assignments, effort, high achievement, and increased literacy, monitors student progress on a daily and monthly basis. Student success is tracked by teachers, guidance counselor and principal with interventions as needed. A **58%** decrease of student referrals for incomplete/each of homework indicates that our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** is helping students meet with success.

The NJ Department of Education recognized the school's equity program as a way to help students understand and appreciate the similarities and differences of all people. Our theme **Ready to Learn...One Family** has served as an umbrella under which staff, parents, students and community have worked together to promote acceptance of others. Our sense of family and commitment to our students has created a city school that attracts families of all kinds and creates an environment that is a unique microcosm of society.

Standardized tests are administered and most students perform at or above the 80th percentile, but these only measure a small portion of what children have learned and understood. Most recently fourth grade success as measured by the state ESPA tests indicated most students were proficient in language arts and math and above proficient in science and in all tested areas above the state averages. Most notably students scored highest in life skills such as independent thinking skills and problem solving and decision making. Alternatives to objective testing have been used in the following ways: teacher observation, anecdotal records of student participation, journals, teacher made tests, students self evaluation, and student activities and projects.

5. Describe collaborative efforts with parents, business, the community and/or higher education that contribute to a school environment governed by the students' needs and promoting high student achievement.

Collaborative efforts with parents, business/community, and higher education contribute to the school culture and environment by providing support and programs to help meet students needs and promote high student achievement. Each year the school creates programs where children can come with their parents to participate in workshops such as Family Math Night, Family Reading nights, Family Sports Day, Celebrate our Differences Day, Veterans Day, Read Across America Week, Curriculum Night, Science Fair and cultural events. The PTO works alongside the school to also provide student enrichment through our Family Pasta dinners, where the teachers serve the families, Trenton Thunder special event night, school store, yearbook, sponsoring programs such as "Meet the Author/Illustrator" for the day, book fairs, trip admission and transportation and support of thematic cultural assembly programs to celebrate holidays such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month, and Women in Science. Volunteering gives the parents an opportunity to contribute to their child's education and work with the school to provide the highest quality of education for their children. Strategies have been implemented to build a large cadre of working and non-working parents to support instructional program.

School/business partnerships have been another strategy employed for school improvement. The partnerships have helped the school meet the changing needs of the student population especially those students who are at risk or need extra attention and support. Specific examples of this have been business sponsored school trips to Liberty Science Center, teacher training workshops, and funding of money for program enrichment such as Building Bridges for conflict resolution.

In the area of higher education, faculty has participated in university training at the College of New Jersey and Rider University in a variety of content areas. The school has also sponsored student interns. The feedback indicates the program is a positive experience for interns. The school has also played an active role in their city as a part of expanding the concept of a school/community partnership. Collaboration has been with the city library, the local police department for programs such as **DARE** and **BRAD**, **Concerned Citizens** of the School for the cultural ties, **CARE** for conflict resolution skills, and the city recreation department to provide a school site to keep students involved in a supervised setting after school during the summer. Visits by City Council members, and the Mayor, have helped students learn about city government. The school capitalizes on year long themes promoting student learning skills and strengthening connections between school and community. For example on **Veteran's Day** students write essays and poems, are visited by civic leaders, attend presentations by veterans from the community and participate in an assembly involving community and students. As an example, events such as this result in special essay contests and celebrations that involve community and students. **Project Discovery**, an innovative program at our school, has community volunteers share the educational and personal characteristics needed to be successful in their careers. Our mentoring program, **Connections**, provides support to at-risk students from community volunteers. All of these multi-faceted aspects of school/community and family work together to promote high student achievement and an environment that puts children first. It is evident that at our school we are **Ready to Learn...One Family**.